

From the *Columbia* Family

As important as solving the technical risk is, we must be vigilant to ensure the organizational and cultural issues that contributed to Apollo, Challenger and Columbia are forever remembered. Under the leadership of the new NASA Administrator, we have every confidence that the sacrifice of our loved ones and those that preceded them will be realized for the benefit of all humankind.

Godspeed Discovery.

Well wishes from Iraq

Kennedy Space Center employee William McQuade worked the STS-114 mission preparations until he was recently called to active duty in Iraq. Lt. Col. McQuade is now serving in the Army Reserve and is currently stationed in Baghdad. He managed to send an e-mail from Iraq to his coworkers at KSC wishing them good luck.

Now that you are getting ready for launch countdown, I just wanted to wish you all good luck that everything goes smoothly and you have a successful STS-114 launch and a safe mission. I will be watching it from over here as best I can. Your professionalism, expertise and team spirit will no doubt lead to a very successful mission.

GOOD LUCK!

Bill

A quarter moon is barely visible in this oblique view of Earth's horizon and airglow, recorded with a digital still camera by the STS-107 crew aboard Columbia.

As our crew looks back at our beautiful planet and then outwards toward the unknown of space, we feel the importance, today more than any time, of space exploration to all those who are living on Earth. Our flight is the next flight of many in the human exploration of the universe. And finally, we reflect on the last Shuttle mission, the great ship Columbia and her crew – Rick, Willie, Mike, K.C., Dave, Laurel and Ian. We miss them, and we are continuing their mission. God bless them tonight, and God bless their families.

Good night.

Commander Eileen Collins

NASA S107E05696

Space Center Roundup

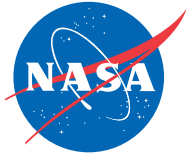
The Roundup is an official publication of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Johnson Space Center, Houston, Texas, and is published by the Public Affairs Office for all Space Center employees. The Roundup office is in Bldg. 2, Rm. 166A. The mail code is AP121. Visit our Web site at: www.jsc.nasa.gov/roundup/weekly/ For distribution questions or to suggest a story idea, please call 281/244-6397 or send an e-mail to roundup@ems.jsc.nasa.gov.

Joanne Hale Editor
Kendra Phipps Assistant Editor
Catherine Borsché Staff Writer
Marshall Mellard Graphic Designer



Roundup

SPACE CENTER ROUNDUP • Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center
SPECIAL EDITION



NASA STS114-S-018

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“On behalf of the many millions of people who believe so deeply in what we do, good luck, Godspeed and have a little fun up there.”

Launch Director Mike Leinbach to the crew, just before launch

Explore. Discover. Understand.

26 July
2005
Houston, Texas

Lt. Gen. Jefferson D. Howell Jr.
Director, Johnson Space Center

Today's launch of Discovery is the first step in our country's journey into the cosmos. We are beginning the fulfillment of our President's Vision for Space Exploration.

Two and one-half years ago, we pledged that we would return to flight to honor the valiant crew of Columbia and their sacrifice. We have done so and will continue to do so with each new mission.

Returning to space has been an extremely long and difficult journey. I salute all of you who gutted it out and got it done so professionally.

Let us go forward!

Bob Cabana
Deputy Director, Johnson Space Center

It's great to have the Shuttle back in space again and headed to the International Space Station. I can't tell you how extremely proud I am of the JSC team and what you've accomplished. I want to thank you for all your hard work, dedication and commitment to human spaceflight that made it possible. With Return to Flight, we've completed that first step in our journey of exploration. Enjoy the success of your efforts and keep up the great work!

William H. Gerstenmaier
Manager, International Space Station Program

Today's launch starts us on a path to return to Space Station assembly, an important step in our journey of exploration. Sergei and John are ready to welcome the crew and begin a week of intense work in space. The Space Station team is thrilled to witness the Shuttle return to flight.

Bill Parsons
Manager, Space Shuttle Program

Every member of the NASA family should take pride in today's launch. Today, Discovery carried the hearts and dreams of each one of us to orbit. The crew is hard at work, as are our teams on the ground, to ensure a successful and safe mission.



NASA's Space Shuttle Return to Flight mission (STS-114) is under way. Space Shuttle Discovery lifted off Tuesday, July 26, from NASA's Kennedy Space Center, Fla. at 10:39 a.m. EDT.



A nighttime panorama of early morning launch day activities at Kennedy Space Center.